



(U) A Different World: First Impressions of a Cross-Training Intelligence Analyst

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(U//FOUO) A budget/HR specialist experiences life as a SIGINT analyst.

(U) Having worked most of my career in the Agency support areas, I have always wanted to see firsthand what the mission side is all about. After being accepted into the Intelligence Analysis Cross-Training Program, I now am learning what analysts really do. Because I have worked the mission indirectly from budget and human resources perspectives, I have always had great respect for analysts and linguists, who serve as the "pulse" of the Agency. Now that I actually sit in the same offices with them, I have an even greater admiration for the daily tasks they perform and the frustrations they encounter.

(U//FOUO) Talk about multi-tasking! (I mean daily tasking as opposed to collection tasking, which is also multi-faceted.) With all of the technological changes in the last decade and the increasing amount of traffic, today's analyst is required to do much more with less manpower and funding -- all in a day's work! While the Joint Military Intelligence College prepared me theoretically, nothing could prepare me for an analyst's day-to-day activities. Luckily for those of us new to this career field, the Agency's senior analysts are more than willing to share their wealth of knowledge.

(U//FOUO) I am also surprised at how much non-SID and external customers underestimate the amount of analysis required before the release of the final product. Today's analyst must be adept at many computer systems and programs. My prior impression was that the analyst sat down and typed the report, and the computer "magically" assigned the distribution and other information. When I wrote my first report, it took me twice as long to identify the distribution, the requirement numbers, and all of the other information as it did to write the actual report.

(U//FOUO) The Intelligence Analysis career field encompasses many facets of operations and provides opportunities to perform a myriad of tasks. The analyst has the option to get involved at the front end of collection tasking and at all points throughout the process as well. Of course, prioritization and time management skills are absolutely essential. Although I love writing and "analyzing," I have learned that there is so much more to intelligence analysis than I ever imagined.

(U//FOUO) Even though it is later in my career, I am very grateful that I am no longer "on the outside looking in" and can contribute in some small part to the mission.

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